

# *Goose Creek State Park General Management Plan*



**North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources**

**Division of Parks and Recreation**

**Coastal Region**

**May 2017**

# I. MISSION AND PURPOSE

## MISSION STATEMENT:

**Conservation:** To protect natural diversity of North Carolina through careful selection and stewardship of state parks system lands;

**Recreation:** To provide and promote outdoor recreation opportunities in the state parks system and throughout the state; and

**Education:** To encourage appreciation of natural and cultural heritage of North Carolina through diverse educational opportunities; for all citizens of and visitors to the State of North Carolina.

**Purpose:** The State of North Carolina offers unique archaeological, geologic, biologic, scenic and recreational resources. These resources are part of the heritage of the people of this State. The heritage of a people should be preserved and managed by those people for their use and for the use of their visitors and descendants.

## PARK PURPOSE:

Goose Creek State Park was established to protect and interpret the unique and diverse natural communities of the central portion of lower (or outer) coastal plain of North Carolina and to provide public access to the Pamlico River.

Significant biological resources found in the park include the following four exemplary natural community types: tidal freshwater marsh, tidal cypress-gum swamp forest, coastal fringe evergreen forest, and estuarine fringe Loblolly Pine forest. The 375-acre Goose Creek State Park Natural Area, designated in 1980 as a National Natural Landmark, is the significant geological resource. The natural area comprises the longest segment of publicly owned, undeveloped, low-salinity estuarine shoreline in the state and in the Southeast. Development and management goals for the park must include the protection and maintenance of this resource as an example of how geologic, topographic, and hydrologic forces interact to create a pattern of natural communities.



**Interpretive Building**

Recreational opportunities at Goose Creek State Park should be compatible and protect and conserve the unique natural resources of the park for interpretation and education. Recreational activities include: hiking, camping, picnicking, fishing, swimming, boating and paddling. The park provides public access to the waters of Goose Creek and Pamlico River. Environmental education



**Accessible Campground at primitive campsites**

opportunities should focus on wetland processes, functions and discuss how wetlands affect humans and the natural environment. Environmental education should also include water quality, resource management, adaptations, and resource stewardship.

Significant scenic resources provide opportunities to view broad expanses of the Pamlico River, Goose Creek and associated estuarine marsh, waterfowl, and birds of prey. The variety of birds changes dramatically with the season. Boardwalks through freshwater and brackish-water wetlands, and trails lead visitors to areas with towering trees draped with Spanish Moss, Cypress swamp, and Live Oak found along the creeks and shoreline. Tall grasses and sedges are found along vistas of the marsh, open water, and shoreline, while loblolly and longleaf pine are found in the upland region.



**Dinahs Landing**

Goose Creek State Park was established to preserve and protect its outstanding biologic, geologic, recreational and scenic resources. The Division of Parks and Recreation is responsible for preserving these resources and providing park experiences that promote pride in and understanding of this part of natural heritage of North Carolina.

## **II. HISTORY**

Before European settlement, the Secotan and Pamlico Native Americans, members of the Tuscarora tribe, occupied the area between Goose Creek and the Town of Bath. The Tuscarora Indians were the dominant tribe during the colonial period, and conflicts arose between the Tuscaroras and settlers along the Pamlico, Neuse and Trent Rivers. Well-known inhabitants of the area included several royal governors, including Governor Charles Eden, and the pirate “Blackbeard.”

In more recent times, subsistence farming, commercial fishing and timber production provided feasible jobs for the economy. Evidence of these activities exist throughout the park. Abandoned fields, once used for farming, have been converted to forest restoration. Remnants of boat piers and loading docks skirt the river. A trackless railroad bed, used for hauling logs and the charred remains of tar kilns, are reminders of the early days of the timber industry.

Like many other state parks, Goose Creek originated due to the initiative of local citizens. At their appeal, the Division of State Parks investigated potential park sites along the Pamlico River and determined that the Goose Creek area was the most suitable. Negotiations for land acquisition began, and a resolution to the governor expressed local support.



**Log Pound and log pilings trail by Eureka Lumber Company.**



Goose Creek State Park opened in September 1974 when 1,208 acres of land was purchased. At the request of local citizens interested in the establishment of a State Park, field investigations were undertaken in the Pamlico River area that resulted in the identification of Goose Creek as a worthy site due to the presence of wetlands, maritime forests, bays, estuaries and pocosins. The landowner, the Weyerhaeuser Company, requested more comprehensive field investigations to identify other alternatives. Further studies strengthened the original findings, and negotiations resumed, with the acquisition of 1,208.60 acres from Weyerhaeuser on September 25, 1974. Widespread public support for the establishment of the park included the six-county Southern Albemarle Association.



**View of Pamlico River**



### III. THEMES AND INVENTORY

#### THEMES OF GOOSE CREEK

Theme Type	Theme	Goose Creek Significance	State Parks System Representation
Archeological/Historic	Cemetery	High	Adequate
Archeological/Historic	Rural-Domestic	High	Adequate
Archeological/Historic	Transportation	High	Adequate
Archeological/Prehistoric	Campsite/Activity Area	High	Adequate
Archeological/Prehistoric	Underwater	High	Adequate
Biological	Freshwater Tidal Wetlands	High	Moderate
Biological	Maritime Forests	High	Moderate
Biological	Maritime Wetland Forests	High	Moderate
Geological	Estuaries	High	Adequate
Scenic	Bays/Estuaries	High	Little
Scenic	Forests	High	Moderate
Scenic	Islands	High	Little
Scenic	Marshes	High	Moderate
Scenic	Meadows/Grasslands	High	Little
Scenic	Pocosins	High	Moderate
Scenic	Rivers	High	Little
Scenic	Scenic Vistas	High	Moderate
Scenic	Swamps	High	Adequate

\*See the Systemwide Plan for references to Theme and Inventory terms. Themes have both actual and “potential” future needs to be at a park.

# FACILITY INVENTORY – PICNIC AND SWIMMING AREA GOOSE CREEK STATE PARK



## Goose Creek State Park Facility Inventory

Picnic & Swimming Area

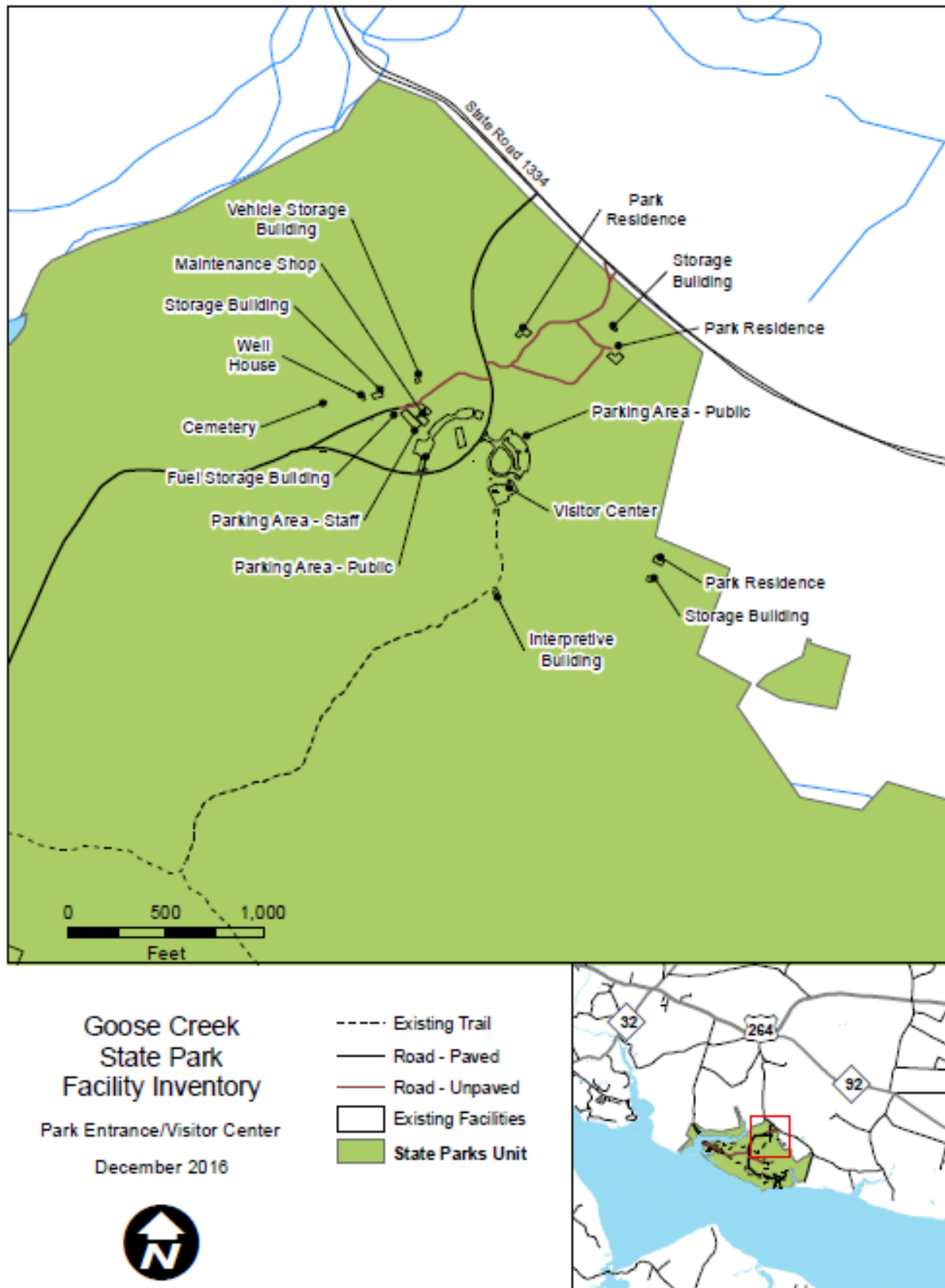
December 2016



- Existing Trail
- Road - Paved
- Road - Unpaved
- Existing Facilities
- State Parks Unit



# FACILITY INVENTORY – PARK ENTRANCE/VISITOR CENTER GOOSE CREEK STATE PARK



# FACILITY INVENTORY – CAMPGROUND GOOSE CREEK STATE PARK



## Goose Creek State Park Facility Inventory

Campground  
December 2016



- Existing Trail
- Road - Paved
- Road - Unpaved
- Existing Facilities
- State Parks Unit





# TRAIL INVENTORY

## GOOSE CREEK STATE PARK

Trail Inventory	Hiking	Paddle
Flatty Creek Trail	0.30	
Goose Creek Trail	2.50	
Huckleberry Trail	0.20	
Ivey Gut Trail	1.80	
Live Oak Trail	0.30	
Mallard Creek Trail	0.50	
Palmetto Boardwalk	0.50	
Tar-Kiln Trail	1.30	
<b>Goose Creek SP Totals (miles)</b>	<b>7.40</b>	
<b>Goose Creek Paddle Trail (miles)</b>		<b>1.00</b>

### TRAILS:

**Flatty Creek Trail:** A 0.30-mile-long trail loops through an upland forest and incorporates short stretches of boardwalk across wetlands. The trail features an elevated observation deck with views of both Goose Creek and the Pamlico River.

**Goose Creek Trail:** A 2-mile-long trail runs from the campground at the mouth of Goose Creek to the Pamlico riverfront. Boardwalks pass through black gum and cypress swamp communities.



**Cemetery at Live Oak Trail**

**Huckleberry Trail:** This 0.20-mile-long trail winds its way through patches of huckleberries and acts as a connector-trail between Live Oak and Mallard Creek trails.

**Ivey Gut Trail:** This 1.80 miles long trail winds through the forest and provides views of Upper Goose Creek through trees along the way.

**Live Oak Trail:** This 0.30 mile long trail features a canopy of live oaks draped with Spanish moss. This loop trail follows the shoreline of the Pamlico River for a short distance and then turns inland and passes a historic cemetery dating from the 1880's.

**Mallard Creek Trail:** This 0.50- mile long trail takes visitors to a small overlook along Mallard Creek, where red-winged blackbirds, herons and egrets have been spotted. Tar Kiln Trail intersects along this trail at about the half-way mark.



**Mallard Creek Trail**

**Palmetto Boardwalk Trail:** This 0.50 -mile long trail is universal compatible and features a rambling boardwalk across a freshwater marsh. A junction with Tar Kiln Trailhead can be found at the end of the boardwalk.

**Tar Kiln Trail:** This 1.30- mile long trail is located between Mallard Creek and Palmetto trails. Remnants of the long leaf pine logging industry of the 1800s and early 1900s are still evident as several tar kilns structures have been marked along the trail.

### **PADDLE TRAIL:**

**Goose Creek Paddle Trail:** is a 1.0-mile blue way located along the park bordering Goose Creek State Park.

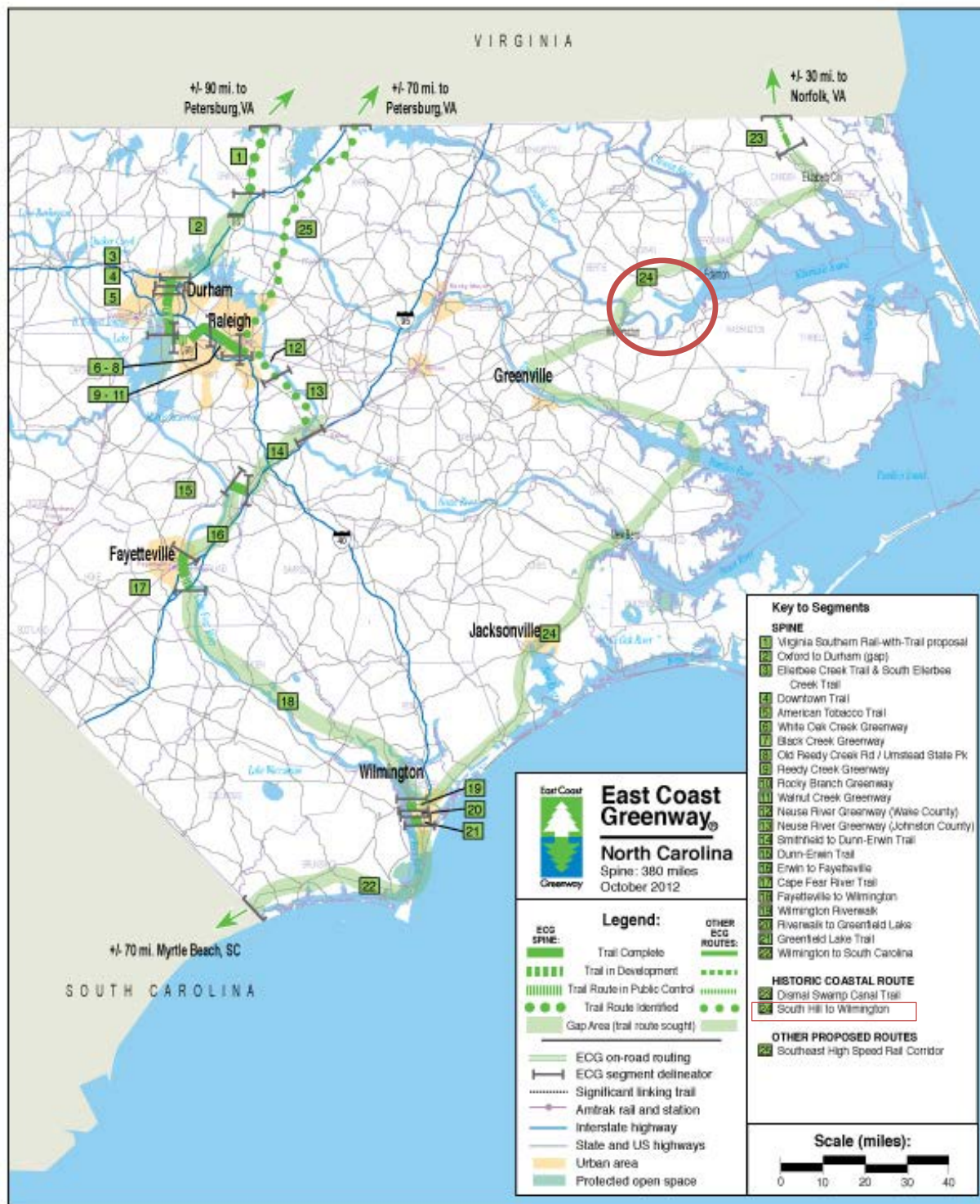
### **Regional Trails System:**

Goose Creek State Park is along the East Coast Greenway. Section 24 references the South Hill to Wilmington portion.



**Palmetto Boardwalk**

# REGIONAL TRAIL SYSTEM -EAST COAST GREENWAY GOOSE CREEK STATE PARK

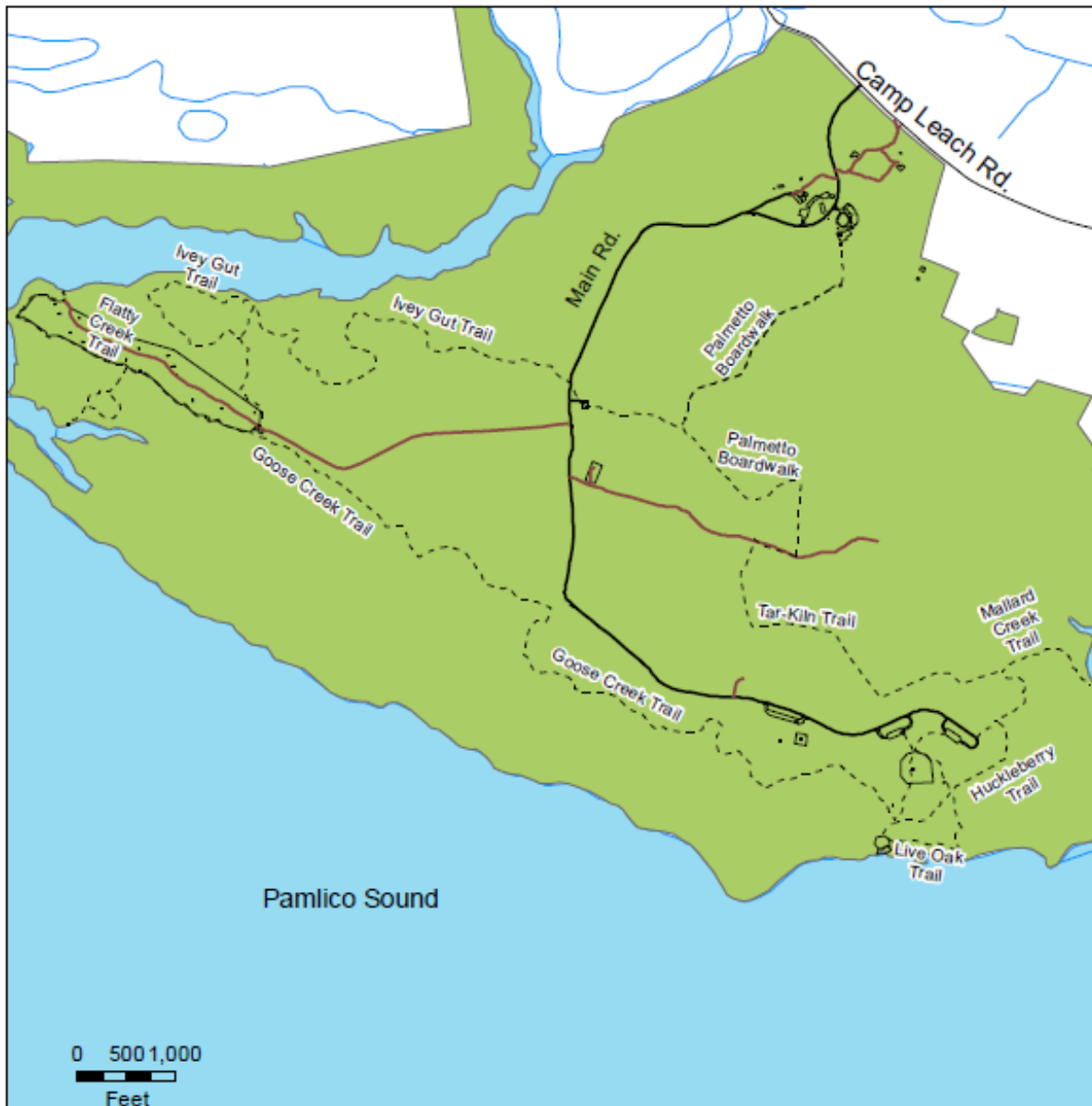


Original map prepared by  
**GREENWAYS**  
INCORPORATED  
Land Use & Infrastructure  
Multi-Sectoral Trail Planning  
Open Space Planning

Map updates by ECGA

©2012 East Coast Greenway Alliance

# TRAIL INVENTORY GOOSE CREEK STATE PARK

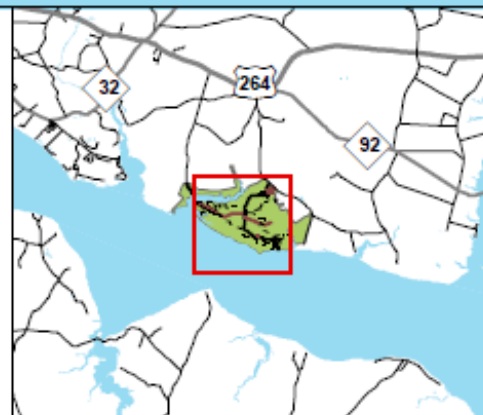


## Goose Creek State Park Trail Inventory

March 2017



- Existing Trail
- Road - Paved
- Road - Unpaved
- Existing Facilities
- State Parks Unit



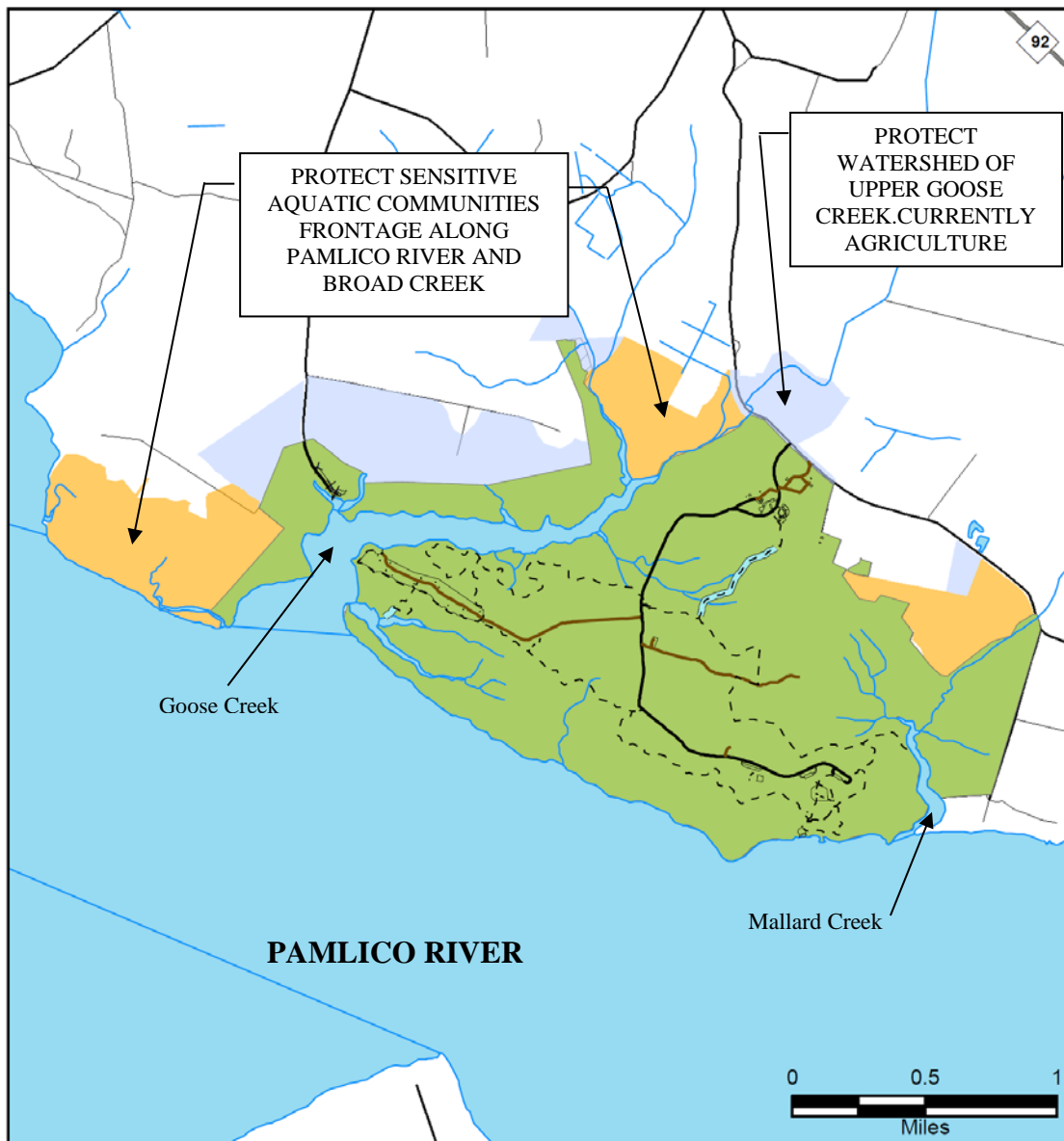


## IV. PLANNING





# LAND PROTECTION PLAN GOOSE CREEK STATE PARK



Goose Creek SP

State Parks Unit

Other Conservation Land

## Land Protection Plan

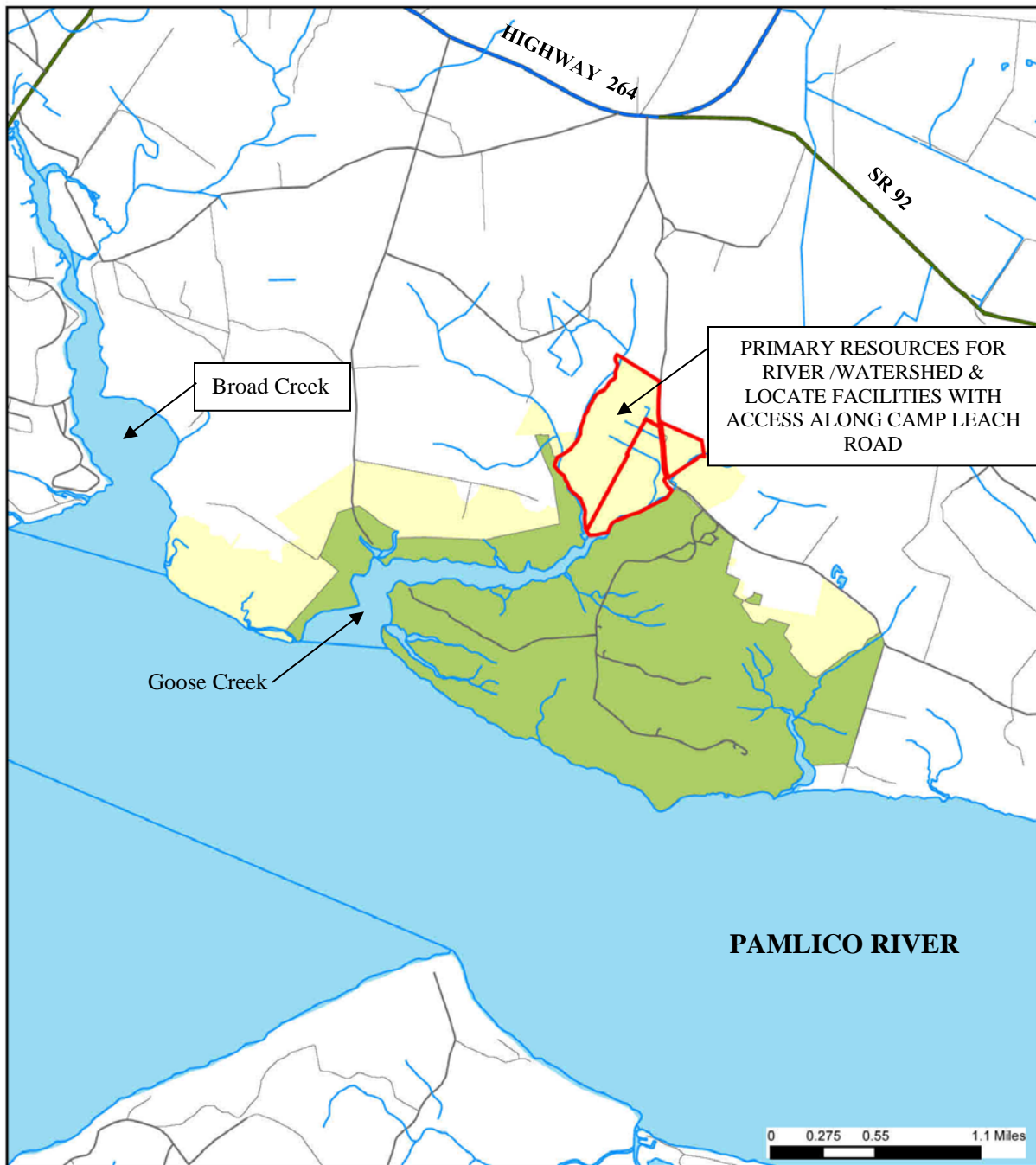
- Primary resource protection
- Inholding
- Scenic protection
- Water quality protection
- Facilities development
- Buffer

- Federal
- State
- Other

January 2014



# LAND PROTECTION PLAN – CRITICAL ACRES GOOSE CREEK STATE PARK



Goose Creek SP



October 2014

- Critical need
- State Parks Unit
- Land Protection Plan**
- Study area
- Future need

## Other Conservation Land

- Federal
- Other
- State



PROJECT EVALUATION PROGRAM LIST  
GOOSE CREEK STATE PARK

Project #	Project Title	Cost
1	Palmetto Loop Trail & Boardwalk	\$129,910
2	Family Tent and Trailer Campground and cabins	\$1,970,000
3	Maintenance Area Improvements	\$659,133
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$2,759,043</b>

*\*\* Estimated project cost does not include contingencies, design fee, nor escalation.*

**1. Palmetto Loop Trail & Boardwalk**

This project scope of work includes: construction of a side loop extension to intersect with the existing Palmetto Boardwalk Trail. The trail is a raised boardwalk over wetlands, marsh areas and connects to the Palmetto Loop Trail. The proposed side loop also requires 900 L.F. of boardwalk which connects to a 700 L.F. hiking trail. The side loop will branch off to the western section of the main trail just to the rear of the existing screened environmental education classroom and will connect back in at the proposed overlook. This will provide access and a loop system to the boardwalk in order to alleviate crowding when multiple groups are using the boardwalk for interpretive and educational programming.

**2. Family Tent and Trailer Campground and Cabins**

Scope of work includes: the construction of a proposed tent and trailer campground and 22 RV campsites with electric, 6 camper cabins including universal shower house. Campground utilities will include full hookups which consists of water, sewer and 100-amp electrical service.



**3. Maintenance Area Improvements**

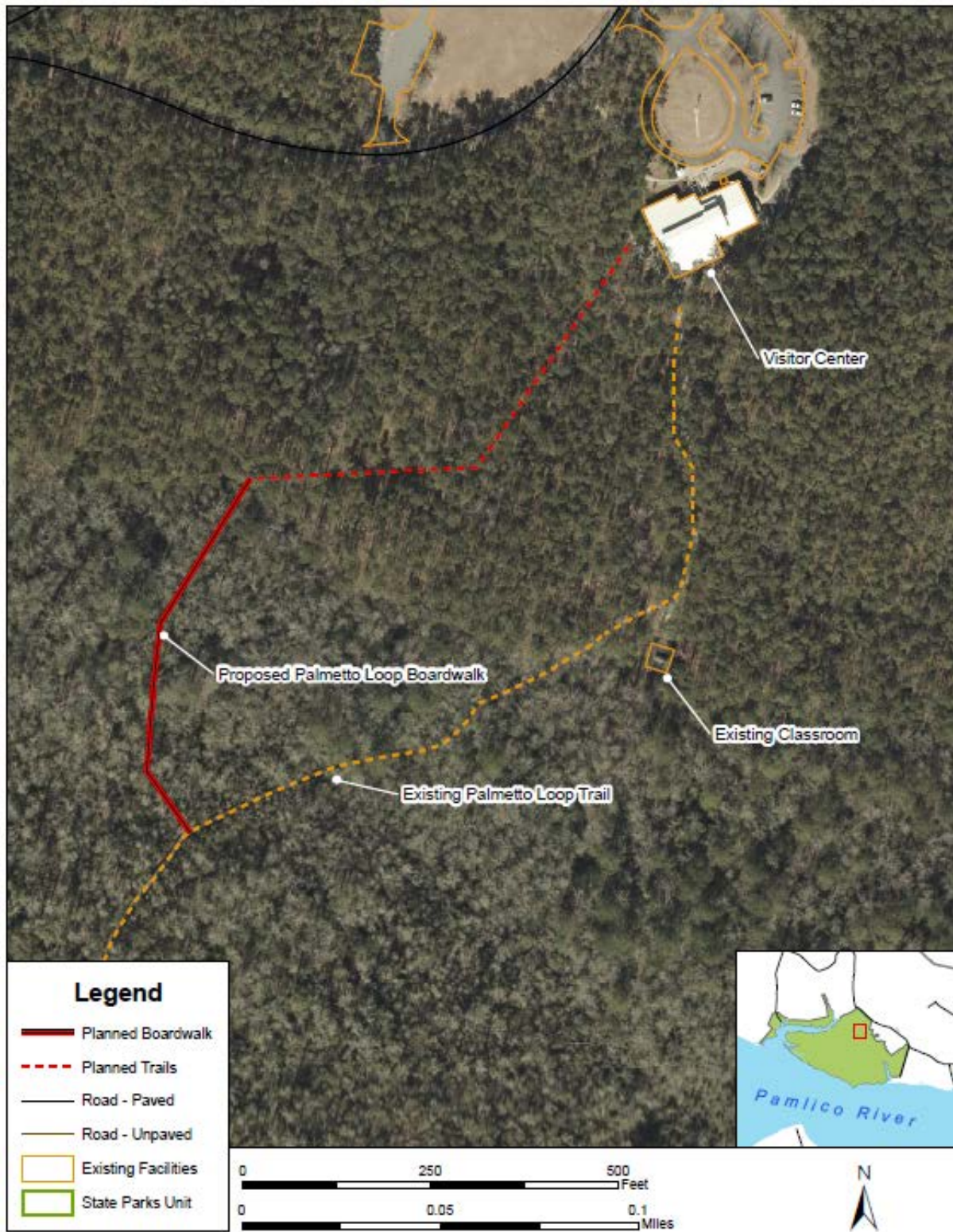
This project proposes converting the existing 2,300 SF office building, built in 1982, into a maintenance office. The contractor will replace the roof with a roofline to allow for positive drainage off the roof and install gutters. Supplemental native plants will be installed between the parking lot and existing office building to provide buffer.

**Campground area and Gum Swamp**

Scope of work: includes proposed 5 bay pole barn with a lumber storage area, the demolition of the existing sidewalk, renovate the shop roof, additional screening fence, add evergreen plants to screen maintenance area, and to pave the maintenance area.

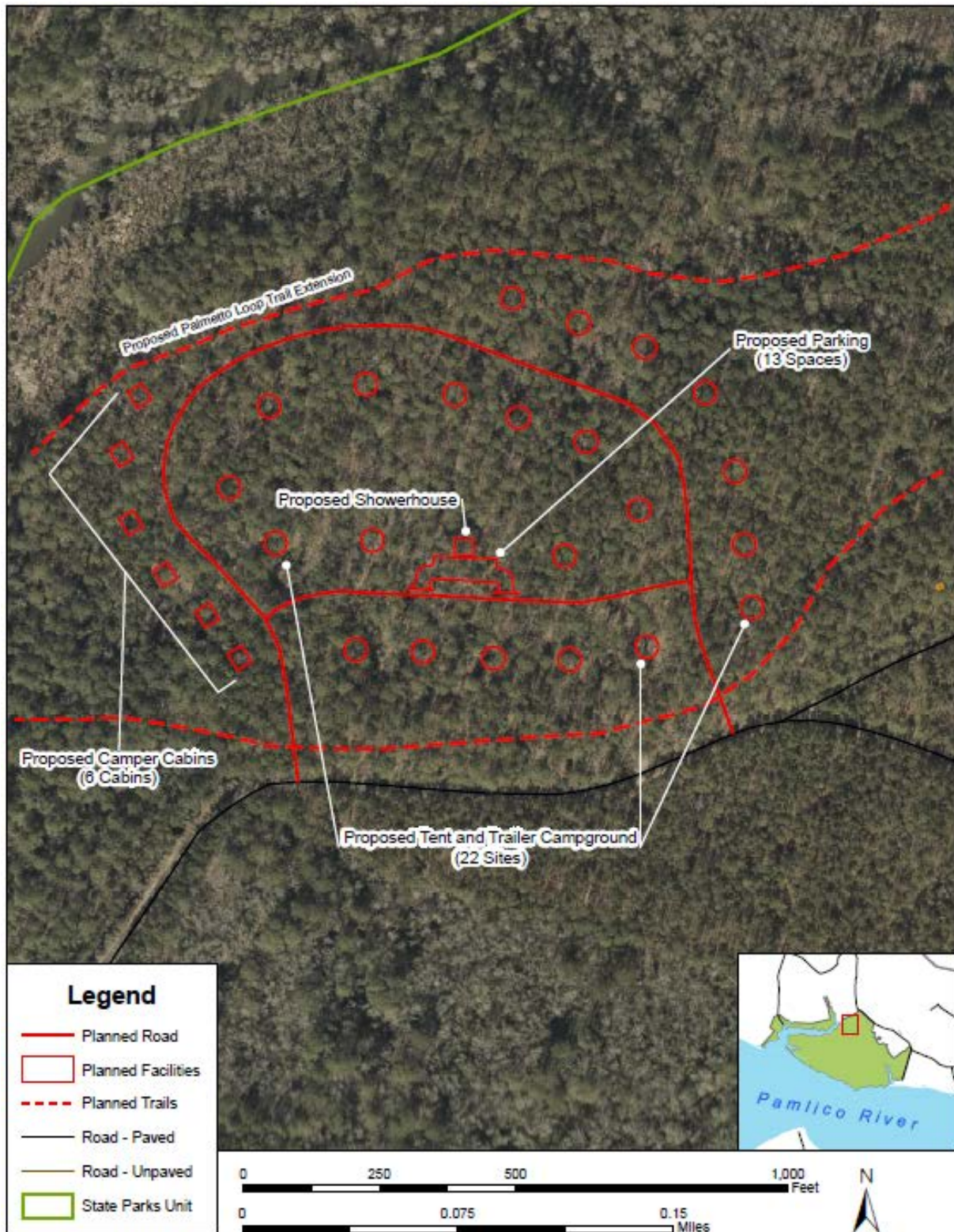


PROJECT #1: PALMETTO LOOP TRAIL AND BOARDWALK  
GOOSE CREEK STATE PARK





PROJECT #2: FAMILY TENT, TRAILER CAMPGROUND AND CABINS  
GOOSE CREEK STATE PARK





PROJECT #3: MAINTENANCE AREA IMPROVEMENTS  
GOOSE CREEK STATE PARK



PARK MAP  
GOOSE CREEK STATE PARK

